

Green Works

WASTE PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

Waste prevention is any practice which eliminates or reduces solid waste that would otherwise be thrown out or recycled. Use this list to identify every-day activities that can reduce the amount of waste your company generates. Promote these ideas throughout your company — and then publicize the savings realized when you practice these waste-wise strategies. Make waste prevention your first priority!

Please use this checklist to complete “Section 1: Preventing Waste” of the application form for the Green Works recognition program. Check the activities your company practices and submit this list along with your application.



Why Practice Waste Prevention?

- To reduce raw material costs
- To reduce purchasing costs
- To conserve valuable resources
- To reduce waste disposal costs
- To enhance your image with the public and your employees

In Office Areas

- ☐ Make double-sided copies.
- ☐ Reuse single-sided pages for drafts and note paper. Establish a draft paper tray near laser printers and copy machines so single-sided sheets can be reused.
- ☐ Before running a large number of copies, do a one-page test of copier settings. Remember to clear features when finished.
- ☐ Avoid making extra copies. Make extras later if you need them.
- ☐ Post paper-saving copy ideas at every copier.
- ☐ Proofread documents on the computer screen before printing.
- ☐ Use outdated letterhead for in-house memos and drafts.
- ☐ Reuse office supplies such as file folders and envelopes (manila and padded).
- ☐ Set up a “reuse station” area for employee use.
- ☐ Circulate one copy of memos and reports, or post in a central location. Better yet, make them available on-line, such as through electronic mail. For example, employees may not need telephone directories or certain reference manuals in their offices if this information is available on-line.
- ☐ Share publications rather than ordering several copies of the same publication.
- ☐ Store old documents on disk, CD-ROM, or micro fiche to minimize the number of hard copies needed.
- ☐ Encourage employees to communicate via electronic mail.
- ☐ Contact companies that send your business unwanted mail and ask to be removed from their lists.
- ☐ Keep your mailing lists up-to-date by requesting corrections and offering the recipient the option of being removed.
- ☐ Revise forms to reduce length and eliminate unnecessary duplicates.
- ☐ Avoid cover sheets for faxes. Use a rubber stamp especially made for fax transmittal.
- ☐ Create a central filing system instead of maintaining duplicate files for each employee.



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Purchasing and Shipping Practices

- ☐ Purchase products in concentrated form or in bulk.
- ☐ Negotiate with suppliers to provide merchandise in returnable or reusable packaging – or in packaging that you can recycle through your in-house recycling program.
- ☐ Instead of cardboard boxes, use durable containers for shipping to your branch offices, stores, or warehouses.
- ☐ Set up a system for returning cardboard boxes and packaging materials to distributors for reuse.
- ☐ Reuse packaging materials from incoming shipments — such as boxes, newspaper, tissue, foam pads, and polystyrene “peanuts” — as alternatives to buying new packing material.
- ☐ Return, reuse, and repair wooden pallets and crates.
- ☐ When billing customers, use “two-way” envelopes which can be folded inside-out and returned to you with payment.
- ☐ Repair rather than replace equipment. Purchase reused or reconditioned office partitions, and remanufactured office equipment.
- ☐ Invest in equipment that prevents waste, such as: high quality, durable, repairable equipment; copiers that automatically make double-sided copies; computer printers that do not discharge unused sheets of paper; and dish washing equipment (along with durable cups, dishware, and cutlery).
- ☐ Use rechargeable batteries for electronics; use solar-powered calculators.
- ☐ Purchase recharged copier, printer, and fax cartridges; reink dot matrix ribbons.
- ☐ Purchase durable, reusable products instead of disposables: use refillable pens and pencils; install reusable furnace and air conditioner filters.



⊕ If you would like free assistance to eliminate or reduce your packaging waste, please call (206) 296-8457.

In Lunch Room Areas

- ☐ Provide durable cups, dishware, and cutlery in employee kitchen or cafeteria.
- ☐ Provide cloth towels as an alternative to paper towels.
- ☐ Offer beverages dispensed from tanks or refillable bottles instead of individual packages, provided that you make available reusable cups for these beverages. If this is not feasible, provide beverages in aluminum cans or glass bottles, which are readily recyclable.

⊕ If you operate a restaurant or cafeteria, please call (206) 296-8800 to request “Recipes to Prevent Waste in the Restaurant.”



For Outdoor Areas and Food Waste

- ☐ Compost yard waste into a valuable soil amendment.
- ☐ Use a mulching mower which eliminates the need to dispose of grass clippings.
- ☐ Set up a worm bin to convert non-fatty food wastes into vermicompost.

Donate Used Items Instead of Paying for Disposal

- ☐ Donate used equipment, furniture, and supplies to charitable organizations or schools.
- ☐ Start a “waste exchange” in your building or office park.
- ☐ Advertise surplus and reusable items through a free listing service, such as the Industrial Materials Exchange (IMEX) at (206) 296-4899. IMEX participates in a National Materials Exchange, accessible by modem at (800) 858-6625. Access is free and available 24 hours each day. Internet address: www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/imex